

DISASTER CONTROL METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Introduction and overview

This topic will cover various methods a community can apply to prevent or minimize losses in case of a disaster. Key areas of focus will be the elements of a Community Disaster Preparedness Plan: Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessments, Response Mechanisms and Strategies, Preparedness Planning, Coordination and collaboration, Information Management, Early Warning Systems, Resource Mobilization, Public Education, Training and Rehearsals (Kiluva, 2012).

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this topic the learner is expected to:

1. Explain disaster control methods
2. Evaluate and apply the preventive measures for disaster management
3. Prepare a community disaster preparedness plan

Preparedness

Disaster preparedness, as already stated, is an aggregate of all the readiness measures taken in view of potential disasters. Disaster preparedness is achieved partially through readiness measures that expedite emergency response,

rehabilitation and recovery and result in rapid, timely and targeted assistance.

Community disaster preparedness planning is a process that entails developing and implementing a locally appropriate and locally "owned" strategy for disaster preparedness and risk reduction

Elements of a Community Disaster Preparedness Plan

Hazard, risk and Vulnerability assessments	Response mechanisms and strategies	Preparedness Plans
Coordination	Information management	Early warning systems
Resource Mobilization	Public education, training, & rehearsals	

Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessments

All planning and implementation of disaster preparedness measures should be based on an assessment and prioritization of the hazards, risks and capacity of

people at risk. This assessment should:

- i. Identify the characteristics, frequency and potential severity of the hazards a community faces.
- ii. Identify the particular geographical areas within the community that are most susceptible and vulnerable to the hazards identified
- iii. Identify the main sectors of a community (population, infrastructure, housing, services, etc.) that would be affected by a specific type of hazard and anticipate how they might be affected.
- iv. Assess the ability of those sectors to withstand and cope with the effects of hazardous phenomena (Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment)

Response Mechanisms and Strategies

Response mechanisms include:

- i. Evacuation procedures (including how to disseminate these procedures to the public)
- ii. Search and rescue teams (including plans for training them)
- iii. Assessment teams (including plans for training them) an assessment process and information priorities for an emergency response
- iv. Measures to activate special installations, such as emergency or mobile hospital facilities

- v. Procedures for activating distribution systems
- vi. Preparations for emergency reception centers and shelters
- vii. Preparations for storing or making arrangements for rapid acquisition of emergency relief supplies and equipment

Preparedness Planning

Disaster preparedness planning involves identifying community resources, determining roles and responsibilities, developing policies and procedures and planning preparedness activities aimed at ensuring timely disaster preparation and effective emergency response. The actual planning process is preliminary in nature and is performed in a state of uncertainty until an actual emergency or disaster occurs. The aim of preparedness planning is to identify assignments and specific activities covering organizational and technical issues to ensure that response systems function successfully in the event of a disaster. The ultimate objective is not to write a plan but to stimulate an on-going interaction between parties, which may result in written, usable agreements.

Coordination and collaboration

Effective disaster response requires mutual trust and coordination of efforts and resources among the many agencies and people involved in emergency response. It

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often occurs that other agencies and organizations have mandates and activities that overlap with those of the National Society. Clear coordination of activities is required to ensure that the maximum number of people is assisted in the shortest possible time and to avoid unnecessary duplication of services. Through direct coordination, agencies can clearly divide responsibility for different operations and plan their actions accordingly. Memoranda of understanding, institutional policies, and joint preparedness planning can serve as the basis for coordination.